United Nations A/ES-10/PV.32

General Assembly
Emergency Special Session

Official Records

32nd meeting
Thursday, 15 January 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Resumption of the tenth emergency special session

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, resumed.

Members will recall that, in paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, the General Assembly decided to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

In that connection, I should like to draw the attention of delegations to the following: document A/ES-10/434, which contains a letter dated 7 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, in which he conveys a letter from His Excellency Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, requesting full support for the convening of an emergency special session to address the gravity of the situation in Gaza; document A/ES-10/436, which contains a letter dated 7 January 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations, requesting full support for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, in accordance with paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006 and resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950, entitled, "Uniting for Peace"; document A/ES-10/440, which contains a letter dated 8 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, requesting the resumption of the tenth emergency special meeting of the General Assembly; document A/ES-10/441 containing a note verbale dated 8 January 2009 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, requesting the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly; and document A/ES-10/439, which contains a letter dated 14 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations demanding the cancellation of today's meeting.

In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the President and Vice-Presidents of the sixty-third session shall serve in the same capacity at the resumed tenth emergency special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to decide that the Credentials Committee of the sixty-third session should serve for the resumed tenth emergency special session?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In keeping with established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/438, concerning Article 19 of the Charter.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

09-20304 (E)

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 5 (*continued*)

Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.21)

The President: I am sorry we were not able to meet in the General Assembly Hall because it is literally crumbling. I saw it a couple of days ago, and I was wondering if that was not a political statement of the building itself. But at any rate, Conference Room 3 is also an adequate meeting place. We are meeting today under the most urgent, indeed the most desperate of circumstances.

Israel has a question.

Mr. Fluss (Israel): We have requested this point of order in accordance with rule 71 to seek clarification on the validity and the legality of convening this emergency special session.

This emergency special session is taking place as the Security Council is actively addressing the situation in southern Israel and the Gaza Strip. Only last week, the Security Council adopted resolution 1860 (2009), which seeks to promote an end to the current violence. According to that resolution, the Council remains seized with the matter, and indeed the Council held consultations on this issue only two days ago. In addition, at this very moment, the Secretary-General is visiting the Middle East, including Israel, with the endorsement of the Security Council, in order to facilitate a solution to the conflict.

Therefore we seek clarification. How does the current meeting correspond with Article 12, paragraph 1 of the United Nations Charter which states:

> "While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests."

The President: You know, it is ironic. A few days ago I was being falsely — totally falsely — accused of trying to silence Israel. That was an absolute and total lie, and I said as much immediately. Now, it is ironic that Israel is trying to silence the General Assembly, the "We the peoples".

I am fully aware of what the representative has said. I am also aware that, shortly before the joint press conference of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Israeli Minister for Foreign Affairs Livni, the United Nations headquarters in Gaza were bombed. It made things very clear: the Security Council resolution has been totally ignored in practice and verbally disdained by Prime Minister Olmert. We are aware of that. There is absolutely nothing that prohibits the General Assembly from putting its full weight behind a resolution that, whether weak or not, is being totally ignored.

If the representative prefers, I will convene the legal advisers and give the legal advice on this matter. So we will wait for that to take place.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): We sought the advice of the Office of Legal Affairs. Paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006 reads:

> "Decides to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume the meeting of the special session upon request from Member States."

The President, at the beginning of his notes, cited the requests from Malaysia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Syrian Arab Republic, who are Member States, who have asked for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

That is the opinion given to us by the Legal Office.

The President: Having thus taken care of the observation by our colleague from Israel, I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to add to what the representative of the Secretariat has just indicated to us that, in the 13 January declaration of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which includes 118 members of this Organization, the Movement fully supported the

convening of the resumption of the tenth emergency special session. In other words, it is not only the States that the President correctly mentioned at the opening of his statement, but there is also a large group of Third World nations that also supported the convening of this emergency special session.

Mr. Fluss (Israel): This is a question on the Charter and the rules of procedure of the United Nations. We seek further clarifications regarding this special session that you have called for, Mr. President. According to you and General Assembly resolution 377 (V), emergency special sessions of the General Assembly are designed to act only when the Security Council fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As I just explained, the Security Council is actively seized of this matter, thus making this meeting superfluous.

Furthermore, we would like to refer you, Sir, and Member States to paragraph 31 of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. According to this paragraph, the reconvening of the emergency special session is subjected to the very same prerequisites of resolution 377 (V) — meaning, as I stated before, that only when the Security Council fails to exercise its responsibility can this meeting be convened. We seek clarification on this matter and on whether the opinion of the legal advisor refers also to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): I can only answer the first part of the intervention. This is not a new emergency special session. The view that we got is that if any Member States requested the resumption, according to paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/17, it can meet.

On the second question, on the advisory opinion, we did not seek an opinion from the Legal Office on that.

The President: Does the representative of Israel mean to boycott the whole meeting? If I may, with all due respect, he seems to be very meticulous about looking for ways that the law be respected. It is being respected. I wish Israel were meticulous about complying with United Nations resolutions for over 40 years. It has been very clear to all of us — I am not blaming the representative of Israel; he is fulfilling orders — as a minister of Israel clearly stated, that the basic objective of her diplomatic endeavours these days is not to stop the military operations. We are not going to allow for this to be boycotted. I invite the representative of Israel to take the floor again.

Mr. Fluss (Israel): We are seeking clarification on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which is a procedural matter. This advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was adopted by this Assembly.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): I have just received legal advice. Rule 71 of the rules of procedure reads:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure."

The President has enjoined that the meeting continues. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President — this is their right — and the appeal shall be immediately put to the vote and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting. A representative rising to a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Mr. Fluss (Israel): We would like to clarify that Israel would not want to challenge the decision of the President of the General Assembly. Israel seeks for the record to make sure and to make it clear that the legal advisor did not give an opinion on the decision and the recommendation of the International Court of Justice, which was adopted by the General Assembly. This is for the record.

The President: So, my brothers and sisters, we will now proceed.

We meet today under the most urgent, indeed the most desperate, of circumstances. The crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, specifically in the Gaza Strip, has raged for far too long. Too many have died. In particular, too many women and children have died. Too many United Nations workers have been killed and gravely injured, and too many United Nations buildings, including schools and hospitals, have been damaged and destroyed. In fact, just a few hours ago,

while the Secretary-General was on an official visit in their country, the Israeli military bombed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) headquarters in Gaza.

We here at United Nations Headquarters have remained too passive for too long as the carnage continues. I am responding to the growing number of Member States, particularly the five that I mentioned and those of the Non-Aligned Movement, who have demanded a resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly as soon as possible. Every day, we receive messages from Gaza and from around the world, including from heads of State and Government, asking, indeed pleading, for the United Nations to stop the violence, protect civilians and attend to the humanitarian needs. Our business here today is urgent.

During this assault, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed, one third of them children. More bodies remain buried under the rubble, out of reach of humanitarian workers because the shelling is too intense — the living would be killed trying to reach the dead. If this onslaught in Gaza is indeed a war, it is a war against a helpless, defenceless, imprisoned population.

The fact that Gaza's population is imprisoned — they cannot leave, they cannot run, they have nowhere to hide from air strikes, artillery or naval attacks — is particularly important to us here in the United Nations, keeping in mind our obligations under Article 1 of our Charter to defend international law.

Israel remains the occupying Power in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the Gaza Strip, and it has specific obligations under the Geneva Conventions to protect the occupied population. Instead of providing protection as mandated by international law, the occupying Power is denying this population, 80 per cent of whom are already refugees and more than half of whom are children, the option to seek refuge and find shelter from the war. Gaza's civilians find themselves locked inside a lethal war zone behind a wall surrounding their densely populated territory. They have no means of escape.

We know the history of Israel's failure to protect the occupied Palestinian population. I will not repeat that history here. But we should keep in mind that, under the Geneva Conventions, the obligations of an occupying Power to provide safety — along with food, water, education, freedom of religion and more — to the occupied population is no less — and in fact is arguably greater — than its obligations to protect its own citizens. When an occupying Power fails in that obligation, then it becomes the responsibility of the international community as a whole, represented here in the United Nations, to provide that protection.

The Palestinians, as an unlawfully occupied population, enjoy the right of resistance within the constraints of international humanitarian law. The rocket attacks by Palestinians against Israeli towns are illegal. No one, not in Sderot or Ashkelon, not in Rafah or Beit Hanoun, should have to live in such fear.

It is a terrible irony that this onslaught in Gaza — what Israel calls its war on terror — has so far led to the deaths of 13 Israelis, 10 of them soldiers, at least four by so-called friendly fire. This is a terrible irony because during the five months of the ceasefire last year not a single Israeli was killed.

Already one year ago, well-known Israeli organizations were denouncing the actions of their own Government towards the civilian population of Gaza, whose very lives it was endangering, as a crime against humanity. These Israeli organizations issued the following statement on 21 January 2008, almost one year ago:

> "We, the Israeli organizations signed below, deplore the decision by the Israeli Government to cut off vital supplies of electricity and fuel ..., as well as essential foodstuffs, medicines and other humanitarian supplies, to the civilian population of Gaza. Such an action constitutes a clear and unequivocal crime against humanity."

The identity of these organizations can be seen in note III of annex I to the text of my statement (see http://www.un.org/ga/president/63/statements/annex1.pdf), which contains a legal analysis of Prime Minister Olmert's statement rejecting Israeli compliance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

The violations of international law inherent in the Gaza assault have been well documented: collective punishment, disproportionate military force and attacks on civilian targets, including homes, mosques, universities and schools.

I remind members that last week an Israeli air strike against one of our schools, a United Nations

school, killed at least 43 people. Many of them were children, and all of them were beleaguered and frightened families seeking shelter from bombs and air strikes. They sought shelter from the United Nations when their homes were bombed, when they were warned to flee an approaching bombing raid but had nowhere else to go, when they faced the most desperate decision any parents are ever forced to make — how to keep their children safe. Those families turned to us, to the United Nations, and we failed in our obligation to keep them safe.

But there is still another violation, one in which we, as the United Nations, are directly complicit. The blockade of Gaza, which has now been going on for 19 months, has been directly responsible for the widespread humanitarian crisis in Gaza even before the current Israeli assault began. That blockade imposed by the occupying Power is in violation of article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits collective punishment under any circumstances.

Yet the blockade has been endorsed, at least tacitly, by powerful parties grouped in the Quartet, placing this Organization in a dubious role and in violation of our obligations under the Charter and international law. The General Assembly, as the nerve centre of the whole United Nations system, and certainly as its most representative organ, must always be vigilant in its defence of the United Nations Charter.

There appears to be a presumption by some that, if the Security Council is seized of a matter or has decided to respond to the current crisis in Gaza within the grouping of the Quartet or other Member States, this body is bound and must confine itself to supporting and following their lead. Yet, in my capacity as President, you in your individual capacity as Member States and all of us together share both an individual responsibility and a collective responsibility as the United Nations General Assembly to uphold the Charter and ensure compliance with United Nations resolutions and international law.

In assuming this office, I made a solemn commitment and undertook as a priority of the Assembly at its sixty-third session the democratization and revitalization of the General Assembly. While it is not my role to prescribe a solution or pretend to settle this long-standing conflict, it is my duty to remind Member States of their and our responsibilities and obligations under the law of the United Nations and to call to their attention to relevant instruments, reports and findings to assist in the settlement of the dispute on the basis of international law.

It behoves us, then, to consider the implications of the continued presence of the United Nations in the Quartet, as we should take into due consideration the counsel of our own judicial organs: the International Court of Justice, the Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Special Rapporteurs.

In 2007, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, Professor John Dugard, took note of the requirements of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding certain Israeli violations of international law. He noted that, while the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the European Union, three of the four members of the Quartet, all had the right to ignore the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the position of the United Nations is, however, very different. The International Court of Justice is the judicial organ of the United Nations. Dugard went on to say that:

> "Moreover the General Assembly has by an overwhelming majority repeatedly given its approval to the Opinion. This means that it is now part of the law of the United Nations. As such the representative of the United Nations in the Quartet — the Secretary-General or his representative — is in law obliged to be guided by the Opinion and to endeavour in good faith to do his or her best to ensure compliance with the Opinion. If the Secretary-General (or his representative) is politically unable to do so he has two choices: either to withdraw from the Quartet or to explain to his constituency — 'we the peoples of the United Nations' in the language of the Charter — why he is unable to do so and how he justifies remaining in the Quartet in the light of its refusal to be guided by the law of the United Nations. The first course is possibly unwise at this time as this would deprive the United Nations of a role in the peace process. This makes the second course essential." (*A/HRC/7/17, para. 53*)

Mr. Dugard continues:

> "For 40 years the political organs of the United Nations, States and individuals have

> accused Israel of consistent, systematic and gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT [occupied Palestinian territories]. In 2004 the judicial organ of the United Nations, in its Advisory Opinion, affirmed that Israel's actions in the OPT do indeed violate fundamental norms of human rights and humanitarian law and cannot be justified on grounds of self-defence or necessity. If the United Nations is serious about human rights it cannot afford to ignore this Opinion in the deliberations of the Quartet, as it is an authoritative affirmation that Israel is in serious breach of its international commitments. Failure to attempt to implement, or even to acknowledge, an advisory opinion dealing with international humanitarian law and human rights law brings the very commitment of the United Nations to human rights into question." (*ibid, para. 54*)

Even without a new advisory opinion, it is clear that the earlier judgment stands. Israel continues to violate international humanitarian law and human rights.

We must look seriously at what John Dugard called "the very commitment of the United Nations to human rights". Is it not incumbent upon us to rethink our role in the Quartet, to rethink how the United Nations itself is unwittingly violating key elements of international law and our own Charter? The United Nations plays a unique role in the international arena through defining and defending the international normative framework for securing and maintaining international peace. We must ask ourselves if it is not a conflict of interest for the United Nations to participate in the Quartet. Does not United Nations participation lend credibility to this ad hoc group, which has shown itself willing to negotiate compromises that threaten to fundamentally weaken those norms?*

It is time to change that. I convened this meeting today at the request of the 118 Member States that make up the Non-Aligned Movement. We meet today recognizing the obligations of the entire United Nations system, of which the most representative and democratic body is the General Assembly, to work, as Article 1 of our Charter defines our purpose, for universal peace, for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are all fully aware that the Security Council passed resolution 1860 (2009) last week. But the relentless onslaught continues in Gaza. Gaza is ablaze. It has been turned into a real burning hell.

The Council called for a ceasefire, but the demand was undermined by the insistence that it be both immediate and durable. This is doubletalk. The obligation for an immediate ceasefire is both unconditional and urgent. Our medium-term goal of a durable and lasting peace cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of the conflict.

The resolution called for unimpeded humanitarian assistance, but it was undermined by the absence of a demand to end the now 19-month closure of Gaza's border crossings by the occupying Power in a blockade supported by some of the most powerful members of the Council itself. We all knew that such a call, without implementation or enforcement, would be ignored with impunity.

When the Council passed resolution 1860 (2009), I stated that we would closely analyse the resolution and determine whether it is serious and contemplates the pertinent measures to ensure both the immediate ceasefire and unimpeded access to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

Little analysis is needed to determine that the Council resolution has failed to bring about either a ceasefire or unimpeded humanitarian access. Obviously, it was never really meant to achieve those objectives. It is clearly not the fault of the majority of the members of the Council; it is due to the fact that there were some in the Council and outside of it bent on betraying their obligation to our Charter. Instead of supporting a strong, clear, unequivocal demand for an immediate ceasefire, those forces succeeded in blocking such a demand, instead allowing the military action to continue, which indeed seems to have been their purpose.

That result, ensuring that the diplomatic efforts allowed the military attacks to continue, matches perfectly the unambiguous role of the occupying

* In a letter dated 19 January 2009, to the Office of the Secretary-General, the Office of the President of the General Assembly confirmed, in the context of the above paragraph, that the contents of the President's statement "... in no way imply that, by representing the United Nations in the Quartet, the Secretary-General is violating the key tenets of international law and the United Nations Charter".

Power. On 4 January, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel stated clearly and unequivocally that "the intensive diplomatic activity of the last few days aims to alleviate the pressure for a ceasefire and to allow time for continuing the military operation".

I urge members to examine her words closely. She was engaging in diplomatic activities not to reach a quick end to the killing but, on the contrary, to "alleviate the pressure" to reach a ceasefire. That may be the Israeli Government's goal, but it is surely not mine. Nor can it be the goal of the United Nations — not the Security Council and not the General Assembly. Our goal can only be an immediate ceasefire. We must increase, not alleviate, the pressure to bring about that ceasefire.

So far, the Security Council resolution has been rejected by both sides, Israel and Hamas. According to reports, the Hamas rejection appears to be based primarily on the fact that the resolution did not call for lifting the blockade that has caused such devastation among the Gaza population for 18 months, even before the current military assault. While it should not be a basis for rejecting an immediate ceasefire, numerous United Nations and other humanitarian agencies have recognized the long-term closure of Gaza's border crossings as not only causing a humanitarian disaster, but as a clear violation of international law and humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Convention's obligations on occupying powers to protect the occupied population.

The Israeli rejection is clear: the Prime Minister rejected explicitly and unequivocally the legitimacy or authority of the Security Council, stating that "the State of Israel has never agreed that any outside body would determine its right to defend the security of its citizens". Israel is a State Member of the United Nations; as such, is it not obligated to accept and indeed implement Security Council resolutions?

It seems to me ironic that Israel, a State that, more than any other, owes its very existence to a General Assembly resolution, should be so disdainful of United Nations resolutions. Prime Minister Olmert's recent statement disavowing the authority of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) clearly places Israel as a State in contempt of international law and of the United Nations.

The Foreign Minister, dismissing the Council resolution altogether, asserted Israel's "right to self-defence". But if Israel's rejection is based on such a claim, it should recognize that, according to Article 51 of the Charter,

> "[m]easures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Additionally, the right of self-defence lasts only "until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security".

The Security Council took the measure it deemed necessary with the passage of resolution 1860 (2009); even if it had been valid, any Israeli self-defence claim terminated at that very moment.

All serious efforts to bring about an immediate ceasefire are urgently needed, and I support them all. Numerous agencies of the United Nations, our key allies among the international humanitarian agencies and important human rights defenders around the world are all calling for an immediate unconditional ceasefire. Regional groups and Member States are joining the call for an immediate ceasefire. People around the world — in the tens and hundreds of thousands — continue to take to the streets, including here in the host country of the United Nations, as well as inside Israel, to demand an immediate ceasefire. We at the United Nations can do no less.

The Council may have found itself unable or unwilling to take the necessary steps to impose an immediate ceasefire. But outsourcing these efforts to one or two Governments or through the Quartet does not relieve the Council of its own responsibilities under the United Nations Charter. The Council cannot disavow its collective responsibility. It cannot continue to fiddle while Gaza burns.

Passage of the Security Council resolution does not eliminate our responsibility. We in the General Assembly, who represent all the nations and peoples of the world, still have a corresponding individual and collective obligation of our own. And we will respond to that obligation.

And so we come together today, in this 32nd meeting of the tenth emergency special session of the

General Assembly, to respond to this most urgent crisis. We are very late. The Governments of Member States that requested this meeting did not intend — and I did not convene this meeting to be — a talk-fest, filled with passionate speeches and leading to no action. I convened this meeting in order to place the power and prestige of the General Assembly — the most representative and most democratic component of the United Nations — in motion towards two urgent demands, after which longer-term issues can be considered: an immediate, unconditional ceasefire and immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access.

I know that members share my sense of urgency and our collective commitment to make good on our so-far unmet obligations to the occupied people in Gaza. We need serious and expeditious diplomacy, not false promises.

For the people of Gaza, the human catastrophe continues. Twenty days later, people continue to die. Our obligation is clear. We, the United Nations, must call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and immediate, unimpeded humanitarian access. We, the United Nations, must stand with the people around the world who are calling and acting to bring an end to this death and destruction. We must stand with the brave Israelis who came out to protest this war, and we must stand with those in the frightened city of Sderot who called for another voice to answer the fear of rocket fire with reconciliation, not war

We must stand with the hundreds of thousands of people who have stopped the trains, petitioned their Governments, poured into the streets around the world, all calling for an end to war. That is our obligation, our responsibility, our duty, as we work, mourning so many deaths, for an immediate ceasefire.

Of course, it will be up to the members of the General Assembly as a whole to determine the resolution we should pass. But I believe that our resolution must reflect the urgency of this moment and the urgency of our commitment to end this slaughter. We do not have time for long, complicated resolutions recalling every previous position and re-examining every unfulfilled mandate. This is the moment for an emergency response.

I hope, and I believe, that our work today will indeed allow us to make good on our founding promise, now so desperately needed by the people of Gaza and Sderot, to end this scourge of war.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Deputy Secretary-General: The Assembly is meeting today as the crisis in and around Gaza has entered its twentieth day. Despite urgent efforts at the United Nations and elsewhere, the situation on the ground remains extremely dire for the civilian populations. The continued violence and suffering is unacceptable. As members all know, the Secretary-General is currently in the region to underscore the urgent need for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). He held talks this week in Egypt and Jordan and is in Israel today. He will also meet with Palestinian leaders and then travel on to Turkey, Lebanon, Syria and Kuwait.

In all his talks, the Secretary-General's message has been unequivocally clear: all violence must cease, and the bloodshed and suffering among the civilian populations must be halted. The fighting must come to an end, and it must do so now. The rockets must stop. Israel's offensive must end. Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), now a week old, must be respected.

Over a thousand Palestinians are now reported dead, a large number of them women and children, with more than 4,700 injured. Three Israeli civilians have died and dozens have been injured. As he has said time and again during the past few days, the fighting must stop — now.

Overnight and today, the violence has intensified. Families trying to flee the fighting had nowhere to go. Over 40,000 people are now taking refuge in shelters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and people seeking sanctuary are being turned away. Hospitals have been hit. This is unacceptable and must stop.

In the Secretary-General's talks with leaders in the region, he has also demanded that urgent humanitarian assistance be provided and distributed, without restriction, to those in need. Food, fuel, medical treatment and other urgently required humanitarian assistance must reach the civilian population of Gaza without delay. There is no question that the civilian population of Gaza faces an acute and deepening humanitarian crisis. Entire families have

perished in the violence, including women and children, United Nations staff and medical workers. We are truly proud of the United Nations staff, who are braving difficult and dangerous circumstances to help those in need.

Today, a United Nations compound in Gaza was shelled again. The Secretary-General has conveyed his strong protest and outrage to Israel's Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Foreign Minister, and he has demanded a full explanation of the attack. Israeli leaders called the incident a grave mistake and apologized for the incident. They also assured him that extra attention would be paid to United Nations facilities and staff and that this would not be repeated. It is imperative that the United Nations not be prevented from using its ability to help people who are in dire need of assistance.

The United Nations calls for an immediate ceasefire and for humanitarian access to provide crucial services. There is a basic obligation to protect civilians and respect the sanctity of human life. It is incumbent on the United Nations not only to help alleviate the suffering, as our staff on the ground are so ably trying to do under dangerous conditions, but also to act decisively to help resolve the crisis and prevent its recurrence. Only an end to violence and a political way forward can deliver enduring security and peace.

The Secretary-General believes from his talks in the region so far that the elements are in place for this violence to end now. It is clear that a return to the status quo ante cannot be an option. If a ceasefire is to be sustainable, we need arrangements to ensure a halt to the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, the reopening of the crossings and the reuniting of Gaza with the West Bank under its legitimate leadership. Beyond humanitarian assistance, the international community must engage in an early reconstruction effort. We call on all Member States to contribute to that endeavour.

We need to reiterate: the time has come for the violence to stop and for us to change fundamentally the dynamics in Gaza. It is the intention of the Secretary-General to send a humanitarian and reconstruction assessment mission to Gaza as soon as a ceasefire is put in place. We must return to the road to peace, end the occupation that began in 1967, attain the establishment of a Palestinian State which coexists alongside Israel in peace and security and achieve the goal of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions. There is no more time to lose. The civilian suffering must end now.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

I request delegations to speak from their seats.

I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank you, Mr. President, for the urgency with which you have convened the General Assembly to address the grave situation being faced by the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the military aggression being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power. On behalf of Palestine, I wish to express our appreciation for your efforts in this regard and for your consistent, heartfelt messages of support and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

As we have repeatedly stated before this Assembly, the support and solidarity extended to the Palestinian people and their just cause from countries, brothers, sisters, friends and international and regional organizations from around the world has been invaluable and essential for the steadfastness and resilience of the Palestinian people over the many long years of oppression, suffering and struggle to achieve their legitimate national aspirations and inalienable human rights, including their rights to self-determination and to freedom.

We are humbled and grateful for such unwavering support. We are especially grateful at this time of crisis, as we collectively strive to cope with the immense loss and grief and the magnitude of the disaster again being inflicted upon our people by the occupying Power and its illegal and destructive policies and practices. As war rages around them in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian people continue to look to the international community, with all its capacity and principles and the might of international law, to help to bring about an immediate ceasefire, as called for by the Security Council, and to put an end to the Israeli onslaught and the grave injustice, suffering and hardship our people have been forced to endure.

We are anguished by the horrific scenes emerging from Gaza of the brutal killing, injury and dismemberment of innocent Palestinian civilians, including so many children and their families, the

displacement of tens of thousands of people and the vast destruction of homes and infrastructure and the very foundations of Palestinian society in this latest deadly Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people, now in its twentieth day. And yet, we have not given up hope, and we maintain our resolve to bring an end to this human disaster, the latest chapter in a tragic story of a stateless, dispossessed and persecuted people that continues to struggle and to plead for justice and freedom in its homeland.

The strong support and moral and humanitarian response of the international community deepens our conviction that this crisis will soon be brought to an end and that justice will ultimately prevail for our long-deprived and suffering people. We remain firm in our belief in the primacy and rule of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental role and responsibility that it must uphold towards the question of Palestine until the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution. The immediate response by the organs, specialized agencies and Secretary-General of the United Nations at this critical moment reaffirms the importance of that role and responsibility and is deserving of the support of all Member States.

Undertaking its central role as the most democratic and representative body of the United Nations, the General Assembly has convened today in response to appeals from all corners of the world for serious efforts to be made to bring an end to the senseless violence that has erupted and to stop the carnage and destruction being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip.

We come before the Assembly one week after the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), on 8 January 2009. Among several other important provisions, in the short term, the Council, in paragraph 1, called for "an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza", and, in paragraph 2, for "the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance, including of food, fuel and medical treatment".

Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), which was adopted following urgent calls for Council action and after a long series of intense meetings, consultations and diplomatic efforts, including by the Arab ministerial committee, President Abbas and ministers members of the Security Council, constitutes an important and absolutely necessary step towards bringing an end to this crisis that threatens to further destabilize the region and gravely threatens prospects for future peace and security.

Moreover, that action by the Security Council in accordance with its Charter responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is vital to the ultimate success of the Egyptian initiative, which was embarked upon last week by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in coordination with the diplomatic efforts of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and the other regional and international efforts under way to resolve the crisis and address its enormous political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic ramifications.

It is imperative that the Security Council and all concerned parties exert the required efforts and work to ensure the effective implementation of that resolution in order to bring an end to all military activities and violence; to address the serious humanitarian and economic needs of the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, including through the lifting of the Israeli blockade; to guarantee a durable ceasefire; and to help the parties return from the precipice to which this crisis has led us and back to the path of peace.

Accordingly, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council's adoption of a resolution on 12 January 2009, which, inter alia, calls for an immediate cessation of Israeli military attacks and demands the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces from the Gaza Strip; demands that Israel, the occupying Power, lift the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and open all border crossings to allow for access and the free movement of humanitarian aid; urges all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law and to refrain from violence against the civilian population; and decides to dispatch an urgent international fact-finding mission to investigate all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by the occupying Power.

Moreover, we welcome the timely mission undertaken by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the region, where he is conducting a series of meetings with leaders in the region aimed at promoting respect

for Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), including securing an immediate ceasefire between the parties and intensifying efforts to provide the necessary arrangements and guarantees to sustain such a ceasefire. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has been consistent in his demand that urgent humanitarian assistance be provided without restriction to the suffering Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

In that connection, we have been informed that the Secretary-General will also meet with members of the United Nations team in the occupied Palestinian territory, who, along with international partner organizations, have been exerting extraordinary efforts to assist the Palestinian people under the most difficult and dangerous of circumstances. We are grateful for the assistance being provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and other agencies and humanitarian organizations. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's intention to coordinate and strengthen the efforts and response of the United Nations, including by carrying out an assessment of civilian needs in the Gaza Strip, as regards both humanitarian and reconstruction needs, as soon as military activities come to a halt.

Our efforts here at the General Assembly must therefore be seen as part of the overall collective international and regional effort converging to bring about an immediate ceasefire leading to the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces from the Gaza Strip and to address the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people there. The Assembly must add its authority and voice in calling for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and intensifying international pressure to respect it. The current situation is unacceptable and untenable and cannot be allowed to continue. Every effort must be made by all concerned parties in accordance with their legal, political and moral obligations to uphold international law and to ensure its respect by the occupying Power in all circumstances.

Regrettably, in blatant violation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and despite regional and international efforts, Israel, the occupying Power, continues its military attacks, using excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate force by all means of heavy weaponry by air, land and sea against heavily populated civilian areas in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian civilians — children, women, men, the elderly, the disabled and entire families — continue to be killed, injured and displaced by the occupying Power even as we speak. More than 1,000 Palestinians, including at least 400 children and women, have been killed and at least 5,000 have been injured, including more than 1,500 children, many critically, and die from their wounds each day. As noted by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes, it is alarming that the number of child casualties has tripled since the beginning of Israel's ground assault in the Gaza Strip, where children constitute 56 per cent of the population. In addition, since the start of the aggression on 27 December 2008, several humanitarian personnel, including staff of UNRWA, doctors and emergency rescue workers, have been killed and injured by the occupying Power.

Israel also continues to wantonly destroy Palestinian homes, civilian infrastructure and public and religious institutions in the Gaza Strip. Thousands of homes have been reduced to rubble, with many of the victims still buried beneath, as rescue workers, including those of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), continue to be obstructed from accessing the dead and aiding the wounded. Medical facilities and ambulances have also suffered damage or have been completely destroyed. Military attacks have not spared water, sanitation and electrical facilities and the damage sustained has seriously degraded services, further endangering the health and well-being of the civilian population. Even United Nations schools and facilities have not been immune from Israeli bombardment and, tragically, as we all know, the 6 January military assault on an UNRWA school in Jabaliya refugee camp, where displaced and frightened families had sought shelter, resulted in the killing of 43 Palestinians and the injury of 55 other civilians.

It has been reported today that Israel, the occupying Power, has bombed Al-Quds hospital in Gaza, where more than 500 patients are being treated, and the main compound of UNRWA, including by using white phosphorus shells that have set food warehouses and workshops on fire. Such barbaric and criminal actions by Israel should be condemned and investigated.

In addition to the condemnable and brutal military campaign against the Palestinian civilian population, Israel also continues to impose other severe measures of collective punishment on the population. The occupying Power maintains its blockade of the Gaza Strip with the closure of all border crossings, only temporarily opening some crossings in recent days for limited entry of desperately needed humanitarian supplies. Even after the decision to allow a humanitarian corridor to open for just three hours a day, the occupying Power continues to obstruct humanitarian assistance and all basic and essential goods, including food, medicine and fuel, remain in critically short supply. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza thus continues to deepen. Hunger, poverty, illness, misery and hardship are pervasive and all aspects of life continue to be impaired, with absolutely no normalcy or stability for any Palestinian mother, father, child or family.

The reality on the ground is extremely shocking and disturbing, characterized by enormous suffering and pain, widespread panic and fear and vast devastation, and the humanitarian crisis is reaching catastrophic proportions in Gaza. The Palestinian people are being completely traumatized and terrorized by the occupying Power, which, in flagrant defiance of all norms and principles of international law and human decency, continues its onslaught against a people that it has impoverished, starved and imprisoned, leaving them completely vulnerable with no place to flee that is safe from its lethal military campaign.

Israel's grave breaches and systematic violations of international law are staggering. Since this crisis began, there is no doubt that a multitude of war crimes have been perpetrated by the occupying Power, in addition to the long series of crimes that it has committed over the decades against the Palestinian people. International law clearly forbids such brutality. Humanitarian and human rights law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibit, inter alia, the killing and bodily injury of civilians, reprisals against civilians and civilian objects, wanton destruction of homes and other civilian property, and collective punishment of civilians. Such actions, wilfully perpetrated, constitute war crimes.

An independent investigation of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip, as called for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council, is therefore extremely important and should be acted upon. The perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable and brought to justice. Moreover, the international community must seriously consider measures to provide protection to the defenceless Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation in accordance with the relevant instruments of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which contains provisions explicitly aimed at ensuring the safety of civilians — in armed conflict, including specific provisions for civilians under foreign occupation, the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, the human rights covenants, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and United Nations resolutions.

Moreover, we reiterate our call for Israel, the occupying Power, to lift the unjust and inhumane siege and blockade that it has imposed on the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip's border crossings should be opened and the occupying Power must ensure the unhindered and safe access of humanitarian personnel and supplies, as well as the free movement of persons and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, in order to alleviate and address the pressing humanitarian and economic needs of the Palestinian civilian population. In that regard, we are cognizant of the need for measures to ensure the sustained opening of the border crossings, as called for in Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), and call for expediting the necessary arrangements in order to provide desperately needed relief to the population and some modicum of normal life.

Here, I wish to reiterate that, for its part, the Palestinian leadership affirms its commitment to upholding its responsibilities in order to most rapidly and thoroughly address the many critical and urgent issues facing the Palestinian people at this difficult time, including the grave humanitarian, socio-economic and security issues we face under Israeli occupation and the issue of intra-Palestinian dialogue and reconciliation efforts for the expeditious restoration of our national unity.

The international community must not shy away from using all the diplomatic and political tools and legal instruments at its disposal to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to end its military campaign against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and all of its

illegal policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Every effort must be made to bring Israel into compliance with its obligations as an occupying Power and as a Member State under international law and the United Nations Charter. Impunity must no longer be tolerated, for, as we are witnessing, the dangers to our people, our region and beyond are far too great and gravely threaten the prospects for making peace, security and coexistence a reality between Palestine and Israel and in the Middle East as a whole.

Accordingly, if the current collective effort to secure a durable ceasefire and respect for the other relevant provisions of resolution 1860 (2009) fails, we will have no choice but to return to the Security Council to seek the adoption of a draft resolution under Chapter VII setting out the appropriate measures to force Israel to stop the grave breaches of international law and human rights violations that it is perpetrating against the Palestinian people under its occupation.

The President: I thank the observer of Palestine for his important declaration on the barbarities and atrocities to which the Palestinian people in Gaza are being subjected by the occupying Power.

I now call on the representative of Senegal, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People) (*spoke in French*): We wish to request the indulgence of the Assembly in making two statements. Our country would like to speak in its national capacity, but, as members are aware, we also hold the chairmanship of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Our second intervention will be in our capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Permit me at the outset to express to you, Mr. President, the great appreciation of the Senegalese delegation for your timely initiative to convene, pursuant to resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, this resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider, under the agenda item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory", the grave situation in the Gaza Strip.

The international community is now facing its responsibilities following Israel's murderous and disproportionate bombing of the Gaza Strip, allegedly to defend its citizens from rocket attacks by Palestinian groups. Those operations, which violate the basic rules of international law, are being carried out before our eyes and in the face of our inaction. Our overwhelming silence is a challenge to peace in the region and seriously jeopardizes the credibility of us all and of our universal Organization.

On Thursday, 8 January 2009, after long days of hesitation, the Security Council finally adopted resolution 1860 (2009). However, that resolution, so long awaited by the international community, has remained dead letter because the Council's hesitation is seen as a lack of the resolve needed to finally persuade the parties to the conflict to observe the ceasefire. Regrettably, since the resolution's adoption, the Council has made no further statements, allowing the planned massacre of hundreds of innocent and defenceless Palestinians to continue.

However, the international community, including the Security Council and the General Assembly, cannot continue to shirk its responsibility with regard to so grave a situation. That is why my delegation is pleased that the Assembly, by virtue of its moral authority, has been seized of the issue, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and its relevant resolution "Uniting for Peace", to discuss the unspeakable suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people by an occupying Power that wrongly believes that only war and destruction can resolve its conflict with its neighbours.

As His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, has often recalled, there is no military solution to this conflict. Only negotiation and dialogue can enable us to achieve a just and lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis. The imposition of force by one party and/or policies of fait accompli will only aggravate the situation.

My country, Senegal, intends to honour its decades-long commitment to this issue by working with all those of goodwill to find a definitive and lasting solution to the issue of Palestine and, in particular, the current situation in Gaza. That is why we consider it imperative to encourage all efforts to

bring about an immediate and permanent ceasefire, a lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip, an end to the rocket attacks on Israeli territory, a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, the opening of crossing points and safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance. We call on the parties to show restraint in order to prevent further useless losses of human life, in particular among innocent civilians, and damage to civilian property. We appeal earnestly to them to refrain from any act that could exacerbate an already very volatile situation.

Senegal appeals urgently to the Security Council to respond to the international community's expectations by continuing to address this grave situation through the adoption of a new draft resolution that, in addition to imposing an immediate ceasefire on the parties, would send to the Gaza Strip an international observer mission led by the United Nations.

While we welcome the humanitarian assistance that Member States have spontaneously provided to the people of Gaza, who are in desperate need, Senegal pays tribute to the continued efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance being made by the Secretary-General and United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the unwavering resolve of non-governmental organizations to effectively address the humanitarian aspects of this intractable and painful conflict.

At this grave moment, Senegal once again asks the parties to demonstrate restraint and appeals to all the members of the General Assembly to avoid verbal escalation and partisan positions so as to achieve what is essential, namely, a cessation of fighting and a return to tranquillity. The Palestinian people, rightly and with understandable anguish, wait for the international community to open the ways to a peaceful, just and lasting resolution of the conflict, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, with the ultimate goal the establishment of a viable, sovereign and independent Palestinian State living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security within secure and internationally recognized borders.

For my second statement, I should like to address the General Assembly on this agenda item in my capacity as the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

We are here to respond to Israel's pursuit of its large-scale military offensive in the Gaza Strip, which is unprecedented in its intensity and is now in its twentieth day. Unfortunately, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 4,000 have been injured. According to UNICEF, since 27 December more than 300 children have been killed and more than 1,500 have been wounded. The number of casualties among women and children is rising. Dozens of Israelis have also been killed or injured. The cost in human life and infrastructure, as well to efforts at peace, are incalculable.

A week ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1860 (2009), in which it emphasized the urgency of the situation and called for the immediate establishment of a lasting ceasefire. That call has not yet been heeded by the parties. It is extremely important that the parties accept the conditions for an immediate ceasefire, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces and an end to the firing of rockets. Only then will the bloodshed stop. It is also essential that a ceasefire monitoring arrangement is put in place, that the Gaza crossings are reopened, that medical and humanitarian supplies are allowed into Gaza unimpeded and that the parties begin a dialogue.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and other members of the international community have called attention to the fact that Israel is waging this war in gross contravention of international humanitarian and human rights law and many United Nations resolutions, and without the slightest concern for the lives of Palestinian civilians, who are already suffering from the consequences of more than 40 years of occupation.

Due to intensive shelling of densely populated areas, thousands of Palestinians are seeking refuge in UNRWA schools. In especially deadly incidents, UNRWA schools in Gaza City and the Jabalia refugee camp, in which hundreds of Palestinian civilians had sought shelter from Israeli bombardment, have been shelled by Israeli forces. In the Al-Fakhoura school incident alone, in the Jabalia camp, Israeli tank and mortar fire killed 43 civilians and injured 100. Just today, Israel bombed the United Nations headquarters in the Gaza Strip, which was sheltering hundreds of people. The entire Israeli political and military chain of

command responsible for those criminal acts must be held accountable.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to reiterate as emphatically as possible that, in addition to being illegal under international law, Israel's attacks are also morally unacceptable. Using heavy artillery and tank fire and employing its air and naval power in the heavily populated Gaza Strip, the Israeli army is continuing to wreak havoc and destruction. Palestinian civilians in Gaza are literally caught in a trap and denied any protection or shelter. They cannot flee, for they come under heavy fire from the Israeli army, and their homes are destroyed. Despite official assertions to the contrary, Israel's actions are serving to expand and deepen the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and are making the daily lives of Palestinian civilians especially difficult.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would like to remind Israel that the Fourth Geneva Convention obligates all occupying Powers to protect the civilian population under their occupation, including through the provision of basic services such as food and medicine. Israel's prolonged closure of border crossings, which prevents the delivery of such essential goods and paralyses the economy, is therefore both a clear violation of the Convention and totally unacceptable. The Gaza Strip remains occupied territory by virtue of the fact that Israel fully controls every aspect of the daily lives of the Palestinian population. The opening of humanitarian corridors and the observance of three-hour lulls cannot fully address all the humanitarian problems in Gaza.

As always, the Committee condemns the firing of Palestinian rockets, which indiscriminately strike Israeli civilians. The Committee once again calls for an immediate end to the firing of rockets. Nevertheless, it is totally unacceptable that the entire population of the Gaza Strip is suffering from terrible collective punishment for the actions of Palestinian factions.

It is the responsibility of each of us in this Assembly, and beyond, to seek reasonable and effective ways to stop the loss of human life, the paralysis and the destruction in Gaza. The European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have, through various initiatives, endeavoured to stop the violence and resolve the current crisis. We are encouraged by the initiative of President Mubarak of Egypt and President Sarkozy of the French Republic to engage all the parties to the conflict. Other members of the European Union, as well as countries of the Middle East, have put forth concrete proposals and offered to provide humanitarian assistance. Just today, the President of the Republic of Senegal, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, is visiting the region as a messenger of peace. The Committee commends the Secretary-General for his principled position on this conflict and supports his visit to the region to personally and closely engage in diplomatic efforts and to make sure that the humanitarian aid workers can help those in need in a timely and uninterrupted manner.

The Committee calls upon the Security Council to take real ownership of resolution 1860 (2009) and to ensure that the parties begin to implement it without delay. The General Assembly should take concrete steps to ensure compliance by the parties with the norms of international law.

In addition, our Committee calls on the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to take urgent and decisive action to uphold their obligation under article 1, to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances. Our Committee for its part stands ready to assist in that effort in keeping with the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

Before closing, I would like to pay warm homage and express the sincere gratitude of the Committee to the men and women of UNRWA and other organizations who are risking their own lives in order to assist the Palestinian people. Tribute should be paid to the courage and devotion shown in their work under the extremely dangerous conditions of war in Gaza.

Mr. Moreno Fernández (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak in this important debate on behalf of the 118 members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

As the Assembly will recall, on 13 January, the Movement issued a third statement on the situation in Gaza, ratifying the role of the General Assembly in the issue and supporting the resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

I truly appreciate the reconvening of the session, which in our opinion should not be limited to a debate, but should also adopt a resolution that effectively contributes to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), adopted on 8 January, and particularly to the international and regional efforts to end the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian population in Gaza. This session should, further, lead to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territory of the Strip, ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population and guarantee the safe and timely access of the necessary humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza. Therefore I request that you, Mr. President, take the lead in the entire process.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again strongly condemns Israel's massive military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip. NAM also condemns in the strongest terms Israel's blatant disregard of resolution 1860 (2009), which calls, inter alia, for an immediate ceasefire and condemns Israel's flagrant defiance of repeated calls from the international community for a total halt to military activity. NAM demands the immediate implementation of the resolution, including in particular its call for an immediate ceasefire leading to the withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from Gaza.

Immediate measures are required to address the pressing humanitarian and economic needs of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including by the sustained and permanent opening of Gaza's border crossings in full compliance with the terms and provisions of resolution 1860 (2009), in order to ensure the free access of humanitarian aid and other essential supplies and goods and to facilitate the passage of persons to and from Gaza.

The brutal Israeli military aggression constitutes a grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and is causing vast suffering among the Palestinian civilian population, fuelling the cycle of violence and threatening international peace and security, as well as the fragile peace process between the two sides.

NAM reiterates its deep regret at the great loss of innocent lives and injuries being caused to Palestinian civilians by the brutal Israeli military campaign, as well as at the extensive destruction being caused to homes, property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement expresses its deepest condolences to the grieving Palestinian people as they mourn the loss of the more than 1,000 Palestinians killed — among them almost 500 children — and 5,000 Palestinians injured, including more than 1,200 children.

Once again, NAM urgently calls for an immediate cessation of all military activities and violence. NAM calls for all efforts to be exerted to compel Israel to cease its aggression and to scrupulously abide by all of its obligations under international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. In that regard, the Movement demands that Israel unconditionally comply with its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, of 12 August 1949.

Moreover, in light of the dire situation facing the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation and aggression in the Gaza Strip, NAM reiterates its call for the immediate provision of protection for that population in accordance with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its grave concern regarding the serious difficulties confronting medical and rescue workers in the Gaza Strip in evacuating and treating wounded civilians and those in need of emergency medical treatment due to Israel's continued attacks and obstruction of ambulances and rescue workers and to severe shortages in medical supplies and the poor condition or lack of the necessary equipment to respond to the critical situation. Similarly, the Non-Aligned Movement strongly condemns Israel's attacks and killing of United Nations humanitarian personnel, including personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), who have been working tirelessly to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people, and calls upon the occupying Power to respect the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

To the foregoing, we add the bombing just a few hours ago by Israeli forces of the United Nations headquarters building in Gaza. I do not put much stock in coincidences or mistakes, so I have no recourse but to ask myself whether this bombing was not a deliberate act to insult the United Nations once again, taking advantage of the fact that our Secretary-General

is visiting the area. I think that we need to look into this incident.

The international community must step up and coordinate its efforts and initiatives to put an end to this crisis and make the efforts necessary to support and promote the peace process and to ensure respect for international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. That is the key to a peaceful political settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole, and is the sole means to guarantee a lasting peace in the region.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports all diplomatic and political efforts at the international and regional levels to address this crisis, including those of the United Nations system, and stresses once again that there is no military solution to this crisis or to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a whole.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports and calls for the full implementation of the Human Rights Council resolution entitled "The grave violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly due to the recent Israeli military attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip" (A/HRC/S-9/L.1), adopted on Monday, 12 January 2009, in Geneva by the Human Rights Council. The Movement supports the speedy dispatch of the independent international fact-finding mission called for in the aforementioned resolution with a view to investigating in situ Israel's violations of human rights and of international law.

The Movement will actively consider any possible action to guarantee the investigation and prosecution of all those responsible of crimes against the civilian population in Gaza. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement stresses that criminal justice must take its course.

The General Assembly, the most democratic and representative body of the United Nations, has the duty to respond to the concerns of the international community about the crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli military campaign and to add its voice and weight to those of the Security Council in calling for an immediate ceasefire and for the occupying Power to respect its obligations under international law.

We also stress the urgency for the international community and relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies to continue their efforts to effectively address the many political, humanitarian, socio-economic and security ramifications of this crisis.

At this critical time, the Movement calls upon the international community to make a special effort to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, by extending emergency assistance to meet the pressing needs of the population of the Strip. The Movement also calls on the international community to pledge the assistance necessary to rebuild the infrastructure and the economy of Gaza, as well as the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, as soon as possible.

The international community must invest in the recovery and development of the economic infrastructure and capacity of the territory, which clearly would contribute to creating an environment conducive to the resumption of the peace process.

I would like to conclude by stressing that there is and there can be no military solution to the conflict. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a whole and to the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba for his courageous, clear and important statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate country Croatia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

The European Union remains deeply concerned over the continuing violence, the plight of civilians in and around Gaza and the suffering and anguish of all civilian populations in the region. We deplore the ongoing hostilities that have led to high numbers of civilian casualties, and we express our sincere condolences to the families of the Palestinian and Israeli victims.

We are profoundly disturbed by the loss of civilian life at the United Nations school in Jabaliya

that resulted from Israeli military action. The European Union is also deeply concerned that humanitarian convoys have been fired upon and humanitarian staff killed. The European Union strongly protests and expresses its outrage at the Israeli shelling of the United Nations compound in the Gaza Strip and demands that the facts be clarified.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of resolution 1860 (2009) by the Security Council and the Council's continuing exercise of its functions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and calls for the resolution's full and immediate implementation. The current situation on the ground makes the need to reach an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire absolutely urgent.

The European Union is determined to make every effort to help to stop the current violence and repeats its call for an immediate cessation of military actions on both sides. There must be an unconditional halt to rocket attacks by Hamas on Israel and an end to Israeli military action. The European Union urges the parties to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. The European Union recalls that no military solution can prevail in Gaza.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation is deeply disturbing. The European Union calls on the parties, in particular Israel, to grant immediate, unhindered and secure passage for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. The European Union welcomes the three-hour halts of Israeli military operations, stresses the importance that these halts be fully respected, and calls on Israel to open a humanitarian corridor in Gaza and allow humanitarian organizations free access to the territory. Food, urgent medical supplies and fuel must be delivered to the Gaza Strip. The safe evacuation of the injured must be allowed. Immediate access for humanitarian workers should be made possible through the opening of crossing points.

The European Union is also ready to step up its already substantial assistance for the improvement of the humanitarian situation of the people in need. The European Union has dispatched a field mission to provide the most appropriate response as quickly as possible, in cooperation with the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other non-governmental organizations.

The cessation of fighting should allow for the lasting and normal opening of all border crossings, as provided for in the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. The European Union is ready to re-dispatch the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Rafah to enable the reopening of that crossing point, in cooperation with Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and Israel. It is also willing to consider the possibility of extending its assistance to other crossing points, provided that the issues relating to security have found a satisfactory response.

The European Union fully supports the international efforts to find an immediate solution to the current crisis, in conformity with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The Union is playing an active part in those efforts. The foreign ministers of the member States of the European Union met in Paris on 30 December 2008 and put forward their proposals to resolve the crisis. Subsequently, a European ministerial delegation led by the European Union presidency, represented by Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, travelled to the region to seek an end to the violence, to alleviate the current distressing humanitarian situation and to discuss the European Union proposals agreed in Paris. The European Union welcomes the initiative of Presidents Mubarak and Sarkozy and follows with hope the latest developments in their efforts, as well as the ongoing visit to the region by the Secretary-General and other high-level visits.

The European Union reiterates the need to step up the peace process. In that context, it welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1850 (2008). We are convinced that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in Gaza or elsewhere. The solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be based on the process set out in Annapolis and in accordance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, in particular the principle of land for peace, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Quartet's Road Map. It must lead to the establishment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, existing side by side with Israel in peace and security.

In order to foster a lasting settlement, the European Union reiterates its willingness to assist in the implementation of a final peace agreement when the time comes. The European Union calls upon the parties to desist from any actions that threaten the

viability of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in conformity with international law.

The European Union is fully aware of the responsibility of the international community, especially that of the Quartet. The European Union also reiterates the importance of the Arab partners' sustained, broad and constructive commitment. There is work to be done in that respect, notably on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative, to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a comprehensive and operational manner.

The European Union also encourages an inter-Palestinian reconciliation process led by President Mahmoud Abbas, commends the mediation efforts of Egypt and the Arab League in that respect and is prepared to support any Government that respects the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, resolutely supports the peace negotiations with Israel and pursues policies and measures that reflect the Quartet's principles.

Finally, let me once again stress the European Union's continuing support for the reaching of an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, the alleviation of the current humanitarian situation and the finding of a final peace agreement. The European Union will play an active role in this matter. In that context, the European Union stresses that the objective of the emergency special session should be to support the implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the ongoing diplomatic efforts on the ground, in particular the Egyptian initiative.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, allow me, Mr. President, to express our gratitude for your response to our request and that of the Non-Aligned Movement to resume the General Assembly's tenth emergency special session to consider the grave and tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of Israel's ongoing intensive acts of aggression on the Gaza Strip. If that aggression continues, it could have serious consequences for the Middle East and, indeed, for international peace and security.

I should also like to commend you, Mr. President, on your own principled position and your tireless efforts to support the just cause of the Palestinian people, especially since this crisis began on 27 December 2008. Your initiative to resume the tenth emergency special session further attests to your ongoing efforts. It also provides an opportunity for the international community to send a strong political message that it greatly regrets and condemns the events taking place in Gaza and that it is determined to act to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to respect its obligations under international law, international humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the most recent of which is Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

As we have all seen, three weeks ago Israel unleashed its military might from the sea, air and land in an act of unprecedented and indiscriminate brutality against the population of Gaza. It did so under a pretext that is unreasonable, unacceptable and in total disregard of all international laws and norms. To date, the attack has resulted in more than 1,000 killed and over 5,000 injured, including 400 in critical condition. The overwhelming majority of the victims have been unarmed civilians, in particular women and children.

The entire world and the human conscience have been stunned by the scenes of devastation and unprecedented violence. Following the tragic bombing of a United Nations school in which entire families had sought refuge, we now see the Israeli military machine also targeting journalists, medical personnel, employees of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, other relief workers and the staff and facilities of international organizations. It is also preventing humanitarian workers from providing necessary humanitarian relief for the targeted civilian population.

Such excesses are unjustified by the reasons given by the occupying Power and are instead part and parcel of a systematic plan to break the will of the Palestinian people through a policy of intimidation, collective punishment and blockade that affects every aspect of life in the occupied territories. The policy also includes restrictions on the movement of people, foodstuffs, medicine and fuel.

Since the beginning of the aggression in Gaza, and in the face of Israel's disregard for international appeals, the Arab League has authorized a ministerial committee to work with members of the Security Council at United Nations Headquarters, in complete awareness of the gravity of the situation and of the fact that this critical stage in the region requires efforts to marshal the necessary support to adopt a resolution compelling Israel to halt its vengeful campaign.

After intensive consultations between members of the Security Council and the Arab ministerial committee, consensus was reached on a draft resolution. The Arab side welcomed the draft resolution with a full sense of responsibility and a positive attitude, as it responded to the principal Arab demands, namely, that an immediate ceasefire be established, an Israeli withdrawal implemented, the crossings opened and humanitarian supplies allowed to enter. Thus, resolution 1860 (2009) was adopted.

We all thought, optimistically, that the resolution would be a way out of the crisis. Israel, however, once again opted to challenge the international will and to disregard the authority of the Security Council. It therefore continued, and indeed escalated, its vengeful campaign against the Palestinian people. The number of civilian victims has doubled since 8 January, when the resolution was adopted.

It is time for the United Nations and all its organs to uphold their responsibilities under the Charter and to speak with one loud voice to compel Israel to halt this aggression and to end the oppression of the unarmed Palestinian population. In that regard, we salute the principled positions of the Secretary-General and the initiative he undertook to visit the region.

It is therefore extremely important for the international community to take immediate and determined steps to help create an active international movement to end the cycle of violence and to deter Israel and to compel it to respect its international and humanitarian obligations and put an immediate stop to its military activities. Our hope, in the Arab Group, is that the General Assembly will adopt, by consensus, a clear, practical and constructive resolution that calls for an immediate ceasefire, supports ongoing international and regional efforts and reinforces Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), regarding the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the lifting of the blockade against Gaza and the restoration of normal life to that part of the Palestinian territories. The Assembly should also call upon Israel to open the crossings, respect international law and international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians and enable the international community and relief organizations to deal with the serious humanitarian situation and the urgent needs of the Palestinian population, especially the population of Gaza. Finally, it should call for the immediate implementation of the recommendation of the Human Rights Council to dispatch a fact-finding mission.

The current situation is an indication that Israel is not yet convinced of the need to abandon the use of force and return to the path of serious dialogue based on the recognition of the legitimate rights of the other side. In addition, Israel's continued disregard for the legitimacy, credibility and will of the United Nations and the international community aggravates feelings of hatred and makes peace even more difficult to achieve in that sensitive region.

The Arab side has proven more than once its serious and resolute desire for peace and its commitment to the principle of a just and comprehensive solution that includes Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories and enabling the Palestinian people to realize their legitimate rights and establish an independent and viable Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Israel must now prove its political will by fulfilling its obligations through an immediate ceasefire and the implementation of resolution 1860 (2009) and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

The President: Before we break for a noon recess, I would like to say that, after listening to so many statements on behalf of Member States and important groupings of Member States, it seems to me that consensus is emerging for the adoption of a resolution that upholds Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and calls for compliance with it and its full implementation.

Based on that and my extensive consultations with many delegations, I appeal to members to consider a draft resolution that will be circulated shortly after the convening of this afternoon's meeting at 3 p.m. I promise to work very hard to put it together, to include all the inputs and to present it to members by 3 p.m., so that we comply with the required 24-hour deadline.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to express Malaysia's appreciation and gratitude to you, Mr. President, for consenting to our request for the reconvening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly on the illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, in order to address the dire and grave situation in Gaza consequent to the military aggression by Israel. We admire your resolute stand to alleviate the plight of the oppressed Palestinian people and fight against the injustices that they face under

Israeli occupation. We stand with you in upholding the rights of the Palestinian people to live in peace, security and dignity and to realize their right to self-determination and independence. Malaysia also stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine in their struggle for justice.

The carnage and destruction unleashed by Israeli forces in Gaza is now entering its fourth week. There has been no let-up in violence, particularly by the Israelis on the Gazan population, and no clear perspective as to when, or even if, it will end. The lives of innocent children, women and the elderly are lost every day. Almost 4,000 people have been injured. Even schools, mosques, houses, hospitals, Government institutions and other basic infrastructure have been destroyed. After three weeks of constant daily bombardment, the death toll exceeds 1,000 people, almost a third of whom are children.

No justification could support this wanton killing of innocent civilians, children, women and the elderly. It is totally unacceptable and beyond common decency that any Government would condone this massacre. But by our own inaction to ensure an immediate end to this killing, maiming and destruction, we are in fact doing just that. Worse still are those who provide the support, in whatever form, for Israel to continue with its blatant disregard for human lives, in violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. This is the only conflict in world history where civilians are locked in and prevented from leaving. Clearly this is a war crime and a crime against humanity of enormous proportions.

Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), inter alia, calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire. My delegation has noted serious efforts trying to achieve that goal, which we consider as the top priority for now. We are disappointed, however, that one week since the adoption of that binding resolution, the fighting continues and the Security Council, which is entrusted with maintaining peace and security, seems to be in a trance as to the next course of action to take towards ensuring the implementation of its own resolution. Each passing day, hour and minute, more lives are lost, more infrastructure is destroyed and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza escalates. Yet the Security Council is incapable of discharging its responsibility to stop these atrocities.

Malaysia has always called for a cessation of hostilities and for the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to take the immediate and appropriate action necessary to stop this carnage. The urgency of this matter and the unfortunate slow action in certain quarters to put an immediate stop to this killing and carnage compelled Malaysia to urge the reconvening of this emergency special session to enable the general membership of this body to take the necessary action to restore peace and security in Gaza.

Our immediate and paramount concern is the fate and suffering of the civilian population of Gaza. The bombardments and military actions have to stop immediately. Malaysia demands an immediate cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire. We demand an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, consistent with Security Council resolution 242 (1967). An international monitoring or peacekeeping force should be established by the United Nations and deployed to ensure the enforcement of the ceasefire and the stabilization of the situation. We urge all the conflicting parties to exercise the utmost restraint in order to stop the atrocities.

To alleviate the mounting humanitarian crisis, assistance must be urgently provided. There is an acute shortage of food, fuel, medicine and medical supplies and other basic necessities, including clean water and electricity. The injured are not receiving the attention they deserve because of these shortages. Israeli action blocking international humanitarian assistance from reaching the victims is deplorable. We demand that Israel immediately lift its siege on Gaza. We also demand that Israel fulfil its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and other international laws and facilitate the safe and unimpeded flow of international humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

On this note, Malaysia, for its part, will contribute $1 million in humanitarian assistance specifically to Gaza. At the same time, the Malaysian Government has also activated the Palestinian Humanitarian Trust Fund, in order to gather public donations and contributions. A prominent Malaysian non-governmental organization, MERCY Malaysia, has also deployed a team of doctors and logistical personnel to Rafah in response to this humanitarian crisis.

Israel's action over the course of the past three weeks, unleashing its military might upon a powerless and defenceless civilian population in Gaza and causing death, injury and destruction, is a blatant violation of human rights conventions, international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the United Nations Charter. Increasing civilian casualties bear testimony to the atrocities committed by Israeli forces. This reminds us of similar atrocities committed against a group of people in recent history. The world's reaction to the atrocities was resolute then and it should be similarly resolute now. Israel must be held accountable for its crime against the Palestinian people in Gaza. It should also be held accountable for its attacks on United Nations facilities, including schools and aid convoys.

The path to peace is clear: Israel must end its occupation of Palestine. Indeed, the present situation is not conducive to durable and lasting peace. Continued occupation, killings and infliction of pain and suffering will only deepen hatred and divisions and will not contribute to peace and security. Only through political negotiations leading to a two-State solution, with the State of Israel and the State of Palestine — with East Jerusalem as its capital — living in peace and within secure borders, will bring about a durable and lasting peace for all Israelis, and all Palestinians, and for the Middle East as a whole. We must stop the violence now. We must stop the bloodshed, and we must prevent the making of another humanitarian catastrophe. We must act now.

In this regard, under your authority, Mr. President, Malaysia requests that, at this emergency special session, the General Assembly adopt a comprehensive and all-encompassing resolution that, inter alia, will lead to, first, a ceasefire enforced by an international monitoring force and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza; secondly, the ending of the blockade and the enabling of access for humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict; thirdly, the establishment of a tribunal to investigate and to prosecute those responsible for the war crimes and crimes against humanity; and fourthly and finally, the imposition of sanctions for non-compliance.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.